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## Ambedkar's view in his book 'Pakistan Or The Partition Of India' on Islam

Indian Ministry of External Affairs, hosts a copy of the book (fundamental original source) on their website, which you can use to verify whether indeed Ambedkar said those things or not: [https://mea.gov.in/Images/attach/amb/Volume\\_08.pdf](https://mea.gov.in/Images/attach/amb/Volume_08.pdf)

There is a side to Ambedkar that is not known, spoken, or written, out of fear by those who have **appropriated** him. Ambedkar's criticism of Hinduism, as a religion, as a way of life – call it what you will, everyone is aware of. From his umpteen speeches and numerous scholarly works, we know Ambedkar as someone who fought and exposed the terrible ills of Hinduism, and we applaud him for it. That Ambedkar left Hinduism and converted to Buddhism is in itself a stinging appraisal of the former. Knowing him, nothing more needs to be said as a critique of Hinduism. Such is the trust one can put in the man.

What we don't know, however, is what he thought of the other great religion of the world – Islam. Because this facet of Ambedkar has been hidden from our general discourse and textbooks, it may come as a surprise to most that Ambedkar thought frequently of Islam and spoke frequently on it. The cold and cruel India of the young Ambedkar, that shaped his views on Hinduism and Hindus – and of which I talked of previously – soon became the cold and cruel India of the old Ambedkar, allowing him, through a study of Islam and Muslims, to make sense of a nation hurtling towards a painful and bloody partition.

A distillate of Ambedkar's thoughts on Islam and Muslims can be found in 'Pakistan Or The Partition Of India', a collection of his writings and speeches, first published in 1940, with subsequent editions in 1945 and 1946. It is an astonishing book in its scope and acuity, and [reading it one realises why no one talks of it, possessing as it does the potential to turn Ambedkar into an Islamophobic bigot for his worshippers on the Left.](#)

Here, then, is Ambedkar on Islam: “Hinduism is said to divide people and in contrast Islam is said to bind people together. This is only a half-truth. For Islam divides as inexorably as it binds. Islam is a close corporation and the distinction that it makes between Muslims and non-Muslims is a very real, very positive and very alienating distinction. The brotherhood of Islam is not the universal brotherhood of man. It is a brotherhood of Muslims for Muslims only. There is a fraternity, but its benefit is confined

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to those within that corporation. For those who are outside the corporation, there is **nothing but contempt and enmity**. The second defect of Islam is that it is a system of social self-government and is incompatible with local self-government, because the allegiance of a Muslim does not rest on his domicile in the country which is his but on the faith to which he belongs. To the Muslim *ibi bene ibi patria* [Where it is well with me, there is my country] is unthinkable. Wherever there is the rule of Islam, there is his own country. In other words, Islam can never allow a true Muslim to adopt India as his motherland and regard a Hindu as his kith and kin.”

This scathing indictment by Ambedkar of Islam never finds a mention in our history books. But then this is India – a Hero must not be perceived as a Villain even though the misperception is entirely of our making. Well, we know better; he didn’t mean to say those things about Islam; perhaps he was misguided; let us look at the context; damn, no, that’s not of any help here; tell you what, let us gag him; for the greater good; for communal harmony; for the sake of IPC Section 295A and our peaceful future.

Selective reading of Ambedkar, by which it is meant **reading only** his damning (and entirely justified) criticism of Hinduism, has led to a prevalent view that **only Hinduism is laden with cultural and religious ills**. One can see this even today, when the Left and its ideologues point selectively to the social and religious evils pertaining to Hinduism. As a result, someone who isn’t well-versed with India may get the impression that it is only Hinduism and Hindus who are to blame for every ill and intolerance that plagues us. The reality, of course, is that social and religious intolerance runs in our veins, it always has and it always will, for none other than the holy scriptures of all religions have mainstreamed it. It is Ambedkar himself who, presciently and fiercely, points to this hypocrisy. Ambedkar writes: **“The social evils which characterize the Hindu Society have been well known. The publication of ‘Mother India’ by Miss Mayo gave these evils the widest publicity. But while ‘Mother India’ served the purpose of exposing the evils and calling their authors at the bar of the world to answer for their sins, it created the unfortunate impression throughout the world that while the Hindus were grovelling in the mud of these social evils and were conservative, the Muslims in India were free from them, and as compared to the Hindus, were a progressive people. That, such an impression should prevail, is surprising to those who know the Muslim Society in India at close quarters.”**

Ambedkar then proceeds to talk in scathing terms of child-marriage, intolerance, fanatical adherence to faith, the position of women, polygamy, and other such practices prevalent among believers of Islam. On the subject of caste, Ambedkar goes into great detail. He says: **“Take the caste system. Islam speaks of brotherhood. Everybody infers**

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that Islam must be free from slavery and caste. Regarding slavery nothing needs to be said. It stands abolished now by law. But while it existed much of its support was derived from Islam and Islamic countries. But if slavery has gone, caste among Musalmans has remained. There can thus be no manner of doubt that the Muslim Society in India is afflicted by the same social evils as afflict the Hindu Society. Indeed, the Muslims have all the social evils of the Hindus and something more. That something more is the compulsory system of purdah for Muslim women.”

Those who rightly commend Ambedkar for leaving the fold of Hinduism, never ask why he converted to Buddhism and not Islam. It is because he viewed Islam as no better than Hinduism. And keeping the political and cultural aspects in mind, Ambedkar had this to say: “Conversion to Islam or Christianity will denationalise the Depressed Classes. If they go to Islam the number of Muslims will be doubled and the danger of Muslim domination also becomes real.” On Muslim politics, Ambedkar is caustic, even scornful. “There is thus a stagnation not only in the social life but also in the political life of the Muslim community of India. The Muslims have no interest in politics as such. Their predominant interest is religion. This can be easily seen by the terms and conditions that a Muslim constituency makes for its support to a candidate fighting for a seat. The Muslim constituency does not care to examine the programme of the candidate. All that the constituency wants from the candidate is that he should agree to replace the old lamps of the masjid by supplying new ones at his cost, to provide a new carpet for the masjid because the old one is torn, or to repair the masjid because it has become dilapidated. In some places a Muslim constituency is quite satisfied if the candidate agrees to give a sumptuous feast and in other if he agrees to buy votes for so much a piece. With the Muslims, election is a mere matter of money and is very seldom a matter of social programme of general improvement. Muslim politics takes no note of purely secular categories of life, namely, the differences between rich and poor, capital and labour, landlord and tenant, priest and layman, reason and superstition. Muslim politics is essentially clerical and recognizes only one difference, namely, that existing between Hindus and Muslims. None of the secular categories of life have any place in the politics of the Muslim community and if they do find a place—and they must because they are irrepressible—they are subordinated to one and the only governing principle of the Muslim political universe, namely, religion.”

The psychoanalysis of the Indian Muslim by Ambedkar is unquestionably deeply hurtful to those on the Left who have appropriated him. How they wish he had never written such things. They try their best to dismiss his writings on Islam and Muslims by taking refuge in the time-tested excuse of “context”. That’s right. Whenever text troubles you, rake up its context. Bring in the grey. Except that in the case of Ambedkar, this excuse

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falls flat. Ambedkar's views on Islam – in a book with fourteen chapters that deal almost entirely with Muslims, the Muslim psyche, and the Muslim Condition – are stand-alone statements robustly supported with quotes and teachings of scholars, Muslim leaders, and academics. To him these are maxims. He isn't writing fiction. The context is superfluous; in fact, it is non-existent.

Read the following statements by Dr. Ambedkar: “The brotherhood of Islam is not the universal brotherhood of man. It is a brotherhood of Muslims for Muslims only. There is a fraternity, but its benefit is confined to those within that corporation. For those who are outside the corporation, there is nothing but contempt and enmity. The second defect of Islam is that it is a system of social self-government and is incompatible with local self-government, because the allegiance of a Muslim does not rest on his domicile in the country which is his but on the faith to which he belongs. Wherever there is the rule of Islam, there is his own country. In other words, Islam can never allow a true Muslim to adopt India as his motherland and regard a Hindu as his kith and kin.”

If you are hunting for a context to the above statements, you have just outed yourself as a hopeless apologist. Well, you are not alone. Some of India's most celebrated hagiographers, commentators, writers, and columnists, that include Ramachandra Guha and Arundhati Roy – both of whom have written copiously on Ambedkar, through stand-alone chapters or books (The Doctor and the Saint; India after Gandhi; Democrats and Dissenters; Makers of Modern India) – are conspicuously silent on Ambedkar's views on Islam and the Muslim psyche. Clearly, this is a story the apologists do not want to tell.

The one thing Ambedkar was not, was an apologist. On the allegiance of a Muslim to his motherland [India], Ambedkar writes: “Among the tenets one that calls for notice is the tenet of Islam which says that in a country which is not under Muslim rule, wherever there is a conflict between Muslim law and the law of the land, the former must prevail over the latter, and a Muslim will be justified in obeying the Muslim law and defying the law of the land.” Quoting the following: “The only allegiance a Musalman, whether civilian or soldier, whether living under a Muslim or under a non-Muslim administration, is commanded by the Koran to acknowledge is his allegiance to God, to his Prophet and to those in authority from among the Musalmans...”

Ambedkar adds: “This must make anyone wishing for a stable government very apprehensive. But this is nothing to the Muslim tenets which prescribe when a country is a motherland to the Muslim and when it is not...According to Muslim Canon Law the

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world is divided into two camps, Dar-ul-Islam (abode of Islam), and Dar-ul-Harb (abode of war). A country is Dar-ul-Islam when it is ruled by Muslims. A country is Dar-ul-Harb when Muslims only reside in it but are not rulers of it. That being the Canon Law of the Muslims, India cannot be the common motherland of the Hindus and the Musalmans. It can be the land of the Musalmans—but it cannot be the land of the ‘Hindus and the Musalmans living as equals.’ Further, it can be the land of the Musalmans only when it is governed by the Muslims. The moment the land becomes subject to the authority of a non-Muslim power, it ceases to be the land of the Muslims. Instead of being Dar-ul-Islam it becomes Dar-ul-Harb. It must not be supposed that this view is only of academic interest. For it is capable of becoming an active force capable of influencing the conduct of the Muslims...It might also be mentioned that Hijrat [emigration] is not the only way of escape to Muslims who find themselves in a Dar-ul-Harb. There is another injunction of Muslim Canon Law called Jihad (crusade) by which it becomes “incumbent on a Muslim ruler to extend the rule of Islam until the whole world shall have been brought under its sway. The world, being divided into two camps, Dar-ul-Islam (abode of Islam), Dar-ul-Harb (abode of war), all countries come under one category or the other. Technically, it is the duty of the Muslim ruler, who is capable of doing so, to transform Dar-ul-Harb into Dar-ul-Islam.” And just as there are instances of the Muslims in India resorting to Hijrat, there are instances showing that they have not hesitated to proclaim Jihad.”

Ambedkar writes: “To the Muslims a Hindu is a Kaffir. A Kaffir is not worthy of respect. He is low-born and without status. That is why a country which is ruled by a Kaffir is Dar-ul-Harb to a Musalman. Given this, no further evidence seems to be necessary to prove that the Muslims will not obey a Hindu government. The basic feelings of deference and sympathy, which predispose persons to obey the authority of government, do not simply exist. But if proof is wanted, there is no dearth of it. It is so abundant that the problem is what to tender and what to omit... In the midst of the Khilafat agitation, when the Hindus were doing so much to help the Musalmans, the Muslims did not forget that as compared with them the Hindus were a low and an inferior race.”

Ambedkar isn't done yet. On the lack of reforms in the Muslim community, he writes: “What can that special reason be? It seems to me that the reason for the absence of the spirit of change in the Indian Musalman is to be sought in the peculiar position he occupies in India. He is placed in a social environment which is predominantly Hindu. That Hindu environment is always silently but surely encroaching upon him. He feels that it is demusalmanizing him. As a protection against this gradual weaning away he is

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led to insist on preserving everything that is Islamic without caring to examine whether it is helpful or harmful to his society. Secondly, the Muslims in India are placed in a political environment which is also predominantly Hindu. He feels that he will be suppressed, and that political suppression will make the Muslims a depressed class. It is this consciousness that he has to save himself from being submerged by the Hindus socially and-politically, which to my mind is the primary cause why the Indian Muslims as compared with their fellows outside are backward in the matter of social reform. Their energies are directed to maintaining a constant struggle against the Hindus for seats and posts in which there is no time, no thought and no room for questions relating to social reform. And if there is any, it is all overweighed and suppressed by the desire, generated by pressure of communal tension, to close the ranks and offer a united front to the menace of the Hindus and Hinduism by maintaining their socio-religious unity at any cost.”

The same is the explanation of the political stagnation in the Muslim community of India. Ambedkar writes: “Muslim politicians do not recognize secular categories of life as the basis of their politics because to them it means the weakening of the community in its fight against the Hindus. The poor Muslims will not join the poor Hindus to get justice from the rich. Muslim tenants will not join Hindu tenants to prevent the tyranny of the landlord. Muslim labourers will not join Hindu labourers in the fight of labour against capital. Why? The answer is simple. The poor Muslim sees that if he joins in the fight of the poor against the rich, he may be fighting against a rich Muslim. The Muslim tenant feels that if he joins in the campaign against the landlord, he may have to fight against a Muslim landlord. A Muslim labourer feels that if he joins in the onslaught of labour against capital, he will be injuring a Muslim mill-owner. He is conscious that any injury to a rich Muslim, to a Muslim landlord or to a Muslim mill-owner, is a disservice to the Muslim community, for it is thereby weakened in its struggle against the Hindu community.”

Then, Ambedkar writes something that would surely confirm him as a certified Islamophobe and a bigot in the jaundiced eyes of those who have appropriated him.

“How Muslim politics has become perverted is shown by the attitude of the Muslim leaders to the political reforms in the Indian States. The Muslims and their leaders carried on a great agitation for the introduction of representative government in the Hindu State of Kashmir. The same Muslims and their leaders are deadly opposed to the introduction of representative governments in other Muslim States. The reason for this strange attitude is quite simple. In all matters, the determining question with the Muslims



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is how it will affect the Muslims vis-a-vis the Hindus. If a representative government can help the Muslims, they will demand it, and fight for it. In the State of Kashmir, the ruler is a Hindu, but the majority of the subjects are Muslims. The Muslims fought for representative government in Kashmir, because representative government in Kashmir meant the transfer of power from a Hindu king to the Muslim masses. In other Muslim States, the ruler is a Muslim, but the majority of his subjects are Hindus. In such States representative government means the transfer of power from a Muslim ruler to the Hindu masses, and that is why the Muslims support the introduction of representative government in one case and oppose it in the other. The dominating consideration with the Muslims is not democracy. The dominating consideration is how democracy with majority rule will affect the Muslims in their struggle against the Hindus. Will it strengthen them, or will it weaken them? If democracy weakens them, they will not have democracy. They will prefer the rotten state to continue in the Muslim States rather than weaken the Muslim ruler in his hold upon his Hindu subjects. The political and social stagnation in the Muslim community can be explained by one and only one reason. The Muslims think that the Hindus and Muslims must perpetually struggle; the Hindus to establish their dominance over the Muslims and the Muslims to establish their historical position as the ruling community—that in this struggle the strong will win, and to ensure strength they must suppress or put in cold storage everything which causes dissension in their ranks. If the Muslims in other countries have undertaken the task of reforming their society and the Muslims of India have refused to do so, it is because the former are free from communal and political clashes with rival communities, while the latter are not.”

History for us is either to be hidden or invented. We tell and retell what we like of it, and of what we don't, we scrunch it up and slip it under the mattress, and then perch ourselves cross-legged over it to retell a little more. We are born storytellers. A lap and a head is all we need. As for truth? Well, it is not there; it vanished from view; and so it never happened. But it did happen. Ambedkar did say these things on Islam and Indian Muslims. In doing so, he gave a choice to us, for he knew us only too well. We could either discuss his views on Islam openly like we do his views on Hinduism, or we could scrunch them up like a plastic bag and slip it under our mattress. He did not live long enough to witness the option that we chose but being the seer that he was he had an inkling.

As a preface to his book, Ambedkar wrote: “I am not sorry for this reception given to my book. That it is disowned by the Hindus and unowned by the Muslims is to me the best evidence that it has the vices of neither, and that from the point of view of independence

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of thought and fearless presentation of facts the book is not a party production. Some people are sore because what I have said has hurt them. I have not, I confess, allowed myself to be influenced by fears of wounding either individuals or classes, or shocking opinions however respectable they may be. I have often felt regret in pursuing this course, but remorse never. It might be said that in tendering advice to both sides, I have used terms more passionate than they need have been. If I have done so it is because I felt that the manner of the physician who tries to surprise the vital principle in each paralyzed organ in order to goad it to action was best suited to stir up the average Indian who is complacent if not somnolent, who is unsuspecting if not ill-informed, to realize what is happening. I hope my effort will have the desired effect.”



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## Ambedkar meets Gandhi

Here was Ambedkar, trying to goad us as a physician would paralysed organs. But he misjudged us. We remain fearful, indifferent, paralysed. Nations that fear their past, fear their future, and fearful nations worship, never follow its great men and women. Ambedkar is no exception. There is no other way of saying this. **Mahatma Gandhi was frightened of Ambedkar's intellect.** We have all been there before, trying to hold our icy core before an adversary armed with a blowtorch – that awful, gut-wrenching moment when he smirks and decides not to embarrass you with the truth, that you were found wanting, that you have been defeated. Defeated, some retreat into humility, others into hubris. Gandhi chose the latter. Ultimately, greatness is judged not by how right you were but, rather, how wrong. Gandhi got it wrong more times than Ambedkar got it right, which was, in this author's opinion, almost always.

Gandhi was a kind man, he was a good man, and therefore fallible. He was prone to vanity and narcissism. Ambedkar wasn't. He wasn't because every single day of his life he was made aware of the fact that the mediocre have inherited the Earth and control it. And on days he wasn't made to feel worthless, his worth was patronised. Nothing came easy to Ambedkar, least of all his genius. Granted, comparisons between great men are odious at best, but in the numerous interactions he had with Ambedkar, Gandhi comes across as a sophomore arguing with his dean – sometimes wide-eyed, sometimes a playground bully, unsure and therefore disposed to bouts of arrogance; and then, as the last throw of dice, couching his ignorance with borrowed theological wisdom because it was underwritten by those as ignorant as him. These are not charitable words, but then an assessment of Gandhi is rarely charitable if it is to be ruthlessly objective. And who else but Ambedkar to have assessed Gandhi like no one ever dared to before or after him. Gandhi was not a liberal – his beliefs on societal structure, on economy, on a concept-state, on what Indians should eat or drink, would make even the most ardent of conservative's blush.

His theories were based less on logic and more on a bizarre sense of faith-based entitlement that can only be described as an inseparable emulsion of homeopathy and spirituality. Gandhi was an intelligent and cunning god-man. He was made for India. He held her pulse, pumped her heart. Ambedkar, on the other hand, was the only true liberal this nation has produced in the last many centuries. Gandhi was a theologian pretending to be a politician; Ambedkar, a supreme scholar. Gandhi was a Social Darwinian; Ambedkar, a Darwinian. Gandhi said he would not "weep over the

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disappearance of machinery”; Ambedkar wanted an industrialized India. Gandhi could have ruled independent India had he chosen to for as long as he wanted; Ambedkar lost an election by some margin. Twice. Gandhi saw the village as India’s liberator; Ambedkar called it a cesspool and a den of ignorance. Gandhi’s self-confidence was buttressed by the blind devotion of his countless followers; Ambedkar’s stemmed from his ability to speak his mind, stand all by himself, and appease no one. Gandhi had an army of men; Ambedkar was a one-man army. Ambedkar saw through Gandhi. Worse, the Mahatma gauged this, but, like a stunned ostrich, pretended to hold fort, employing as bulwarks his minions who were also petrified of Ambedkar’s intellect. India has forever been a land of such tragedies. The one who truly was a Mahatma fought a man pretending to be one and lost. But he went down fighting. And how. That Gandhi was dealing with a different kind of man should have become obvious to him after their very first formal extended meeting. The conversation, which took place on 14 August 1931, has been recorded for posterity and is revealing beyond measure.

Gandhi: “I understand that you have got some grievances against the Congress and me. I may tell you that I have been thinking over the problem of Untouchables ever since my school days – when you were not even born.”

Ambedkar: “It is true, Mahatmaji, that you started to think about the problem of Untouchables before I was born. All old and elderly persons always like to emphasize the point of age.”

Gandhi: “The Congress has spent not less than rupees twenty lakhs on the uplift of the Untouchables.”

Ambedkar: “The Congress is not sincere about its professions. Had it been, it would have surely made the removal of Untouchability a condition, like the wearing of khaddar, for becoming a member of the Congress. No person who did not employ untouchable women or men in his house, or rear up an untouchable student, or take food at home with an untouchable student at least once a week, should have been allowed to be a member of the Congress. Had there been such a condition, you could have avoided the ridiculous sight where the President of the District Congress Committee was seen opposing the temple entry of the Untouchables. You might say that Congress lacked strength and therefore it was unwise to lay down such a condition. Then my point is that Congress cares more for strength than for principles. This is my charge against you and the Congress. You say the British Government does not show a change of heart. I also

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say that the Hindus have not shown a change of heart in regard to our problem, and so long as they remain adamant, we would believe neither the Congress nor the Hindus. We believe in self-help and self-respect.”

Gandhi: “It is really surprising that men like you should offer opposition to me and to the Congress.”

Ambedkar: “We are not prepared to have faith in great leaders and Mahatmas. Let me be brutally frank about it. History tells that Mahatmas, like fleeting phantoms, raise dust, but raise no level.”

Game over.

It would be wrong to suggest that Ambedkar hated Gandhi. Hate cannot cloud the judgment of a man as rational and detached as Ambedkar, for if it did, he would no longer be the guardian of these virtues. What Ambedkar employed, instead, was logic, through which, slowly, methodically, year on year, decade on decade, he dismantled Gandhi's sainthood. There was no hate involved, just the brute force of reasoning and judgment. Ambedkar was unsparing and unyielding, and the Mahatma was only too glad to oblige.

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## Ambedkar's rational view & Gandhi's justification of Moplahs (the Malabar Muslims) [Anti-Hind] Rebellion 1921

When the Great War ended with the disbanding of the Ottoman Empire, Gandhi persuaded the Congress to support the Khilafat Movement – a violent agitation for restoration of the Islamic Caliphate deposed by the victorious British. Before long, he pinched his nose and plunged into the murky waters of religious appeasement and terror rationalisation in the wake of the ghastly anti-Hindu violence perpetrated by the Malabar Muslims (Moplahs) in 1921.

Ambedkar, who saw Gandhi's advocacy of the Khilafat Movement as a pernicious political stunt, said “The movement was started by the Muslims. It was taken up by Mr Gandhi with a tenacity and faith which must have surprised many Muslims themselves.” Ambedkar viewed the Moplah rebellion as nothing but jihad. He said, “The Muslim agitators, preached the doctrine that India under the British Government was Dar-ul-Harab [The Abode of War; a place where the Muslims are not in power] and that the Muslims must fight against it and if they could not, they must carry out the alternative principle of Hijrat”. Ambedkar continued, pulling no punches. “The aim of the Khilafat movement was to establish the kingdom of Islam by overthrowing the British Government. Knives, swords and spears were secretly manufactured, bands of desperadoes collected for an attack on British authority. On 20th August a severe encounter took place between the Moplahs and the British forces at Pinmangadi. Roads were blocked, telegraph lines cut, and the railway destroyed in a number of places.

As soon as the administration had been paralysed, the Moplahs declared that Swaraj had been established. A certain Ali Mudaliar was proclaimed Raja, Khilafat flags were flown, and Ernad and Walluvanade were declared Khilafat Kingdoms. As a rebellion against the British Government it was quite understandable. But what baffled most was the treatment accorded by the Moplahs to the Hindus of Malabar. The Hindus were visited by a dire fate at the hands of the Moplahs. Massacres, forcible conversions, desecration of temples, foul outrages upon women, such as ripping open pregnant women, pillage, arson and destruction – in short, all the accompaniments of brutal and unrestrained barbarism, were perpetrated freely by the Moplahs upon the Hindus until such time as troops could be hurried to the task of restoring order through a difficult and extensive tract of the country. This was not a Hindu-Moslem riot. This was just a Bartholomew [reference to the St. Bartholomew's Day massacre in 1572].”

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To Ambedkar's horror, **Gandhi laid the blame squarely on the Hindus.** "Hindus," said the Mahatma, "must find out the causes of Moplah fanaticism." [In the modern scenario just like Kashmiri Pandits must find out the causes of the exodus of 1990s in J&K.] He added "They will find that they are not without blame. They have hitherto not cared for the Moplah. They have either treated him as a serf or dreaded him. They have not treated him as a friend and neighbor, to be reformed and respected. It is no use now becoming angry with the Moplahs or the Muslims in general."

If such rationalisation wasn't unpleasant enough, **Gandhi went further, blaming everyone else for the Moplah barbarity but the Moplahs themselves.** "The Government has thoroughly exploited the Moplahs' madness," he said. "They have punished the entire Moplah community for the madness of a few individuals and have incited the Hindus by exaggerating the facts. Malabar Hindus, like the Moplahs, are an excitable people and the Government has incited them against the latter." Gandhi said, "The outbreak would not have taken place if the Collector had consulted the religious sentiment of the Moplahs."

That religious sentiment, as analyzed by Ambedkar, was jihad. **Indeed, Muslim leaders themselves agreed with Ambedkar. But Gandhi didn't.** Maulana Hasrat Mohani, the eulogized freedom fighter and a friend of the Mahatma, and one who had coined the slogan "Inquilab Zindabad", justified the massacre of Hindus by saying that this was Islamic jihad and that according to the rules of jihad, those who help the enemy become enemies themselves. Shockingly, Gandhi was conciliatory towards the Maulana. "I do not blame the Maulana. He looks upon the British Government as an enemy. He would defend anything done in fighting it. He thinks that there is much untruth in what is being said against the Moplahs and he is, therefore, not prepared to see their error. I believe that this is his narrowness, but it should not hurt the Hindus. The Maulana speaks what is in his mind. He is an honest and courageous man. All know that he has no ill will against the Hindus." "In spite of his amazingly crude views about religion," said Gandhi, "there is no greater nationalist nor a greater lover of Hindu-Muslim unity than the Maulana."

So here was Gandhi, a Hindu, schooling a Maulana on Islam. He wasn't done yet. He transmogrified next into a Maulana himself, quibbling on Islamic sanctions just so he could venture into the minds of the men who Ambedkar had called barbarians and **rationalise their barbarity.** "Their [the Moplahs'] notions of Islam were of a very crude type," claimed the Mahatma. "Forcible conversions are horrible things," counselled Gandhi. "But Moplah bravery must command admiration. These Malabar are not

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fighting for the love of it. They are fighting for what they consider is their Religion and in the manner they consider is religious. They are brave.”

Then came the cruellest of blows – a plea to the Hindus to rationalise the bloodbath by taking recourse in dharma. “Even if one side is firm in doing its dharma,” said Gandhi, “there will be no enmity between the two. He alone may be said to be firm in his dharma who trusts his safety to God and, untroubled by anxiety, follows the path of virtue. If Hindus apply this rule to the Moplah affair, they will not, even when they see the error of the Moplahs, accuse the Muslims.” “I see nothing impossible in asking the Hindus to develop courage and strength to die before accepting forced conversion,” preached the saint.

Gandhi continued: “I was delighted to be told that there were Hindus who did prefer the Moplah hatchet to forced conversion.” “Even so it, is more necessary for a Hindu to love the Moplah and the Muslim more, when the latter is likely to injure him or has already injured him.” “Why should a single Hindu have run away on account of the Moplahs’ atrocities?”

This was sheer lunacy. The Mahatma was beseeching the Hindus to hold their ground even as they were being hunted down and butchered. One could quote more, much more, of this utterly reprehensible apologia from the Mahatma’s playbook were it not so tormenting. Of little comfort is the fact that the saint continued to hold such views despite condemnation by men like Ambedkar.

Decades later, while preaching to those affected by the pre-partition Hindu-Muslim violence, Gandhi said: “Hindus should not harbour anger in their hearts against Muslims even if the latter wanted to destroy them. Even if the Muslims want to kill us all we should face death bravely. If they established their rule after killing Hindus we would be ushering in a new world by sacrificing our lives. None should fear death. Birth and death are inevitable for every human being. Why should we then rejoice or grieve? If we die with a smile we shall enter into a new life, we shall be ushering in a new India.”

Ambedkar was incensed at Gandhi’s selectivity, more so of his stand on the Moplah Massacre. “Mr Gandhi has never called the Muslims to account even when they have been guilty of gross crimes against Hindus.” said Ambedkar. “Mr Gandhi has never protested against such murders [of prominent Hindus like Swami Shradhanand, Rajpal, Nathuram Sharma]. Not only have the Muslims not condemned these outrages but even



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Mr Gandhi has never called upon the leading Muslims to condemn them. He has kept silent over them. Such an attitude can be explained only on the ground that Mr Gandhi was anxious to preserve Hindu-Moslem unity and did not mind the murders of a few Hindus, if it could be achieved by sacrificing their lives.”

Ambedkar next turned to Gandhi’s behaviour during the Moplah Massacre, a pogrom he had condemned in the strongest of terms earlier. “This attitude to excuse the Muslims any wrong, lest it should injure the cause of unity, is well illustrated by what Mr Gandhi had to say in the matter of the Moplah riots. The blood-curdling atrocities committed by the Moplahs in Malabar against the Hindus were indescribable. All over Southern India, a wave of horrified feeling had spread among the Hindus of every shade of opinion, which was intensified when certain Khilafat leaders were so misguided as to pass resolutions of ‘congratulations to the Moplahs on the brave fight they were conducting for the sake of religion and jihad’. Any person could have said that this was too heavy a price for Hindu-Moslem unity. But Mr Gandhi was so much obsessed by the necessity of establishing Hindu-Moslem unity that he was prepared to make light of the doings of the Moplahs and the Khilafats who were congratulating them. He spoke of the Moplahs as the ‘brave God-fearing Moplahs who were fighting for what they consider as religion and in a manner which they consider as religious’.”

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## Ambedkar's rational view & Gandhi's justification on the events similar to what happened in Bangalore riots on 11 August 2020, or the Sweden riots on 29 August 2020

Another incident around the same time brought to light the differences between Ambedkar and Gandhi, underscoring further the gap that exists between objectivity and selectivity, and how the latter is used to devastating effect in politics. It was the publication of a pamphlet called *Rangila Rasool*, written as a retaliation for *Sita ka Chhinala*, a book penned by a Muslim that claimed Lord Rama's wife, Sita, was a prostitute.

Ambedkar stood for Mahashe Rajpal, the publisher of the pamphlet who was assassinated by a Muslim fanatic, IIm-ud-din, this while Muhammad Ali Jinnah defended IIm-ud-din in court, and none other than Allama Iqbal carried IIm-ud-din's coffin at the funeral.

Ambedkar was outraged at what was done to Rajpal; Gandhi was outraged at what Rajpal did. "I am no defender of the author of *Rangila Rasool*," said Gandhi, adding that the book gave him "deep pain". He called the book offensive and its author a mischief-maker. He wanted the law changed. The law changed. In came the dreaded IPC section 295A, calling for punishing those who "hurt religious sensibilities", and the India of the kind Ambedkar had imagined, an India proclaiming liberty and freedom of expression, changed forever. For the worse.

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## ‘Ambedkar for the eradication of caste system’ vs. ‘Gandhi in support of the caste and varna system’

The dismantling of Gandhi’s sainthood by Ambedkar took a decisive turn in the late 1920s. It is revealing that of the 98 weighty volumes that make up the Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Ambedkar’s name doesn’t figure till the fifty-third. From then on, there is a veritable Cambrian Explosion and Ambedkar features regularly and copiously – the buildup to the Poona Pact, the Temple Entry Bill, the state of the so-called Depressed Classes and, tellingly, Gandhi’s anxiety that Ambedkar, and not he, was the true representative of Dalits.

Gandhi couldn’t stomach the rise of Ambedkar. Time and time again, he tries to show Ambedkar his place, is patronising to the extreme, displays uncharacteristic rudeness, and gets into banal contests as to who truly represented Dalits. And right through their duels, one cannot help but imagine Ambedkar eyeing the Mahatma with a wry smile while steaming his glasses and massaging them with his tie-end. The battle was over even before it had begun. Here is Gandhi, bristling with unease and envy. “I repudiate his [Ambedkar’s] claim to represent them [Depressed Classes]. I am the representative of the depressed classes. Get a mandate and I may not be elected but Ambedkar cannot be returned.” What Gandhi blurted out was true. He not only would have been elected, he would have been elected with a thumping majority, and on any seat he wished to contest. India was eating out of his hands. Ambedkar, on the other hand, would have forfeited his deposit. He lost two elections that he later contested. Fame and foresight are rarely bedfellows.

The Mahatma, meanwhile, was relentless. It was almost as though he was canvassing door-to-door. “I am speaking with a due sense of responsibility, and I say that it is not a proper claim which is registered by Dr Ambedkar when he seeks to speak for the whole of the untouchables of India.” When a delegation of Dalits asked him, “To what extent can we consider you as our man?” Gandhi replied, “Since before Ambedkar was born, I have been your man.”

And here is Gandhi displaying cringe-worthy condescension when confronted on the subject of ‘temple entry’ by a cool and collected Ambedkar: “When you use derogatory and angry words for me, I tell myself that I deserved that. I will not get angry even if you spit on my face. I say this with God as witness. I know that you have drunk deep inside of the poisoned cup. However, I make a claim that will seem astounding to you. You are

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born an untouchable, but I am an untouchable by adoption. And as a new convert I feel more for the welfare of the community than those who are already there.”

Ambedkar was beginning to get used to such patronising fluff. “I have no interest in the temples being thrown open to us.” he told Gandhi. Things came to a head on the subject of untouchability, caste, and varna. Ambedkar’s views were well-known. He had honed them through decades of studying Hinduism. His thoughts weren’t meant to win political battles, but, rather, philosophical, even existential ones. The scholarship was astounding, as also seen later in The [Annihilation of Caste and the Ranade Speech](#); each word a distillate of thoughtful reflection, each quote an exposition of philosophical depth. Gandhi stood no chance. “The outcaste is a by-product of the caste system.” Ambedkar told Gandhi. “There will be outcastes as long as there are castes. Nothing can emancipate the outcaste except the destruction of the caste system. Nothing can help to save Hindus and ensure their survival in the coming struggle except the purging of the Hindu faith of this odious and vicious dogma.”

The [Mahatma’s responses exposed him wholly for what he was – an unintentional casteist bigot](#). “I do not believe the caste system, even as distinguished from Varnashrama, to be an odious and vicious dogma.” Gandhi asserted. “It has its limitations and its defects, but there is nothing sinful about it as there is about untouchability, and, if it is a by-product of the caste system it is only in the same sense that an ugly growth is of a body, or weeds of a crop. It is as wrong to destroy caste because of the outcastes as it would be to destroy a body because of an ugly growth in it, or a crop because of the weeds.” As for casual casteism, he spoke of Ambedkar thus, thinking he was giving Ambedkar a compliment: “His exterior is as clean as that of the cleanest and the proudest Brahmin.”

When asked by a Dalit delegation about his views on the varna system Gandhi replied: “All occupations should be hereditary. Millions of people are not going to become Prime Ministers and Viceroys.” There was nothing sinful about the caste system. It was not a vicious dogma. It was wrong to destroy it. Said the father of our nation. Indeed, millions of people are not going to become prime ministers. [A chaiwala must remain a chaiwala and his progeny must carry forward the family tradition of pouring a steaming cup of milk tea in a kullarh without spilling a drop.](#)

Gandhi was an ardent, almost militant supporter of the caste system, not just early on in his life (when one could be forgiven for subscribing to uninformed opinions) but well into

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his mature political and spiritual avatar. “I believe that if Hindu Society has been able to stand it is because it is founded on the caste system.” he declared as late as 1921 when he was in his 50s, and by which time he had already anointed himself as the saviour of Dalits.

Gandhi said : “The seeds of Swaraj are to be found in the caste system. Different castes are like different sections of military division. Each division is working for the good of the whole. A community that can create the caste system must be said to possess unique power of organisation. Caste has a ready-made means for spreading primary education. Every caste can take the responsibility for the education of the children of the Caste. Caste has a political basis. It can work as an electorate for a representative body. Caste can perform judicial functions by electing persons to act as judges to decide disputes among members of the same caste. With castes it is easy to raise a defence force by requiring each caste to raise a brigade. I believe that inter-dining or intermarriage are not necessary for promoting national unity. Taking food is as dirty an act as answering the call of nature. The only difference is that after answering calls of nature we get peace while after eating food we get discomfort. Just as we perform the act of answering the call of nature in seclusion so also the act of taking food must also be done in seclusion. To destroy caste system and adopt Western European social system means that Hindus must give up the principle of hereditary occupation, which is the soul of the caste system. Hereditary principle is an eternal principle. To change it is to create disorder. I have no use for a Brahmin if I cannot call him a Brahmin for my life. It will be chaos if every day a Brahmin is to be changed into a Shudra and a Shudra is to be changed into a Brahmin. The caste system is the natural order of society. I am opposed to all those who are out to destroy the Caste System.”

A few years down the line, Gandhi watered down his love for the caste system a little (without abandoning it) and bestowed his tenderness, instead, on the varna system. Note the fact that caste system & varna system are not exactly the same. Except that now his views became even more bizarre and bigoted. “I believe that the division into Varna is based on birth” he asserted. “There is nothing in the Varna system which stands in the way of the Shudra acquiring learning or studying military art of offence or defense. The Varna system is no bar to him. What the Varna system enjoins is that a Shudra will not make learning a way of earning a living. There is no harm if a person belonging to one Varna acquires the knowledge or science and art specialized in by persons belonging to other varnas. But as far as the way of earning his living is concerned, he must follow the occupation of the Varna to which he belongs which means he must follow the hereditary profession of his forefathers.” **[Means a sweeper**

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**can learn, but has to earn from sweeping.]** “The object of the Varna system is to prevent competition and class struggle and class war. I believe in the Varna system because it fixes the duties and occupations of persons. Varna means the determination of a man’s occupation before he is born. In the Varna system no man has any liberty to choose his occupation. His occupation is determined for him by heredity.”

These, then, were the views of the self-anointed Redeemer of Dalits – that a Shudra could gain and dispense knowledge, fight in a war, do business, but he must earn his living through serving others. Reading, fighting, and doing business were to be his hobbies, nothing more.

One cannot but appreciate the herculean restraint Ambedkar would have had to exercise in the face of such theories. Gandhi had become the supreme test for ahimsa (non-violence) himself. There was no way out. The Mahatma just wouldn’t admit he could be wrong, that he was building a house of cards while tormented by a sneezing fit. Sadly, his crude, unscholarly churnings only increased in their ferocity and obstinacy with time, even as he could see he was on thin ice. “Hereditary Varnashrama-dharma was Hinduism’s greatest gift to mankind,” Gandhi said, “while what Ambedkar desires”, he complained, “is complete destruction of Varnashrama-dharma of his imagination. Varnashrama to him means the essence of superiority and inferiority. I admit that today Varnashrama does mean that, if it also means much more, but the evil of high-and-low-ness is represented by untouchability. When, therefore, the latter is demolished, Varnashrama will be purged of the very thing for which Dr Ambedkar abhors it.”

This was nonsense, and Ambedkar told him as much. “I shall have nothing to do with Varnashrama that would keep me and mine forever at the bottom of the social scale.” On caste and the cruelty of it, Ambedkar’s masterpiece, *The Annihilation of Caste*, remains unsurpassed in its literary distinction and sheer raw energy. It has the power to move mountains. But not saints. “I have questioned the authority of the Mahatma whom they revere,” says Ambedkar of his invitees in the opening pages of *The Annihilation*. “They hate me,” he laments. They hated him, alright. His invite was cancelled at the last moment. Step by step, page by page, Ambedkar lays out in astonishing detail the evil nature of the caste system and the ambivalence in Hinduism that propagated and preserved it.

Next, he turns to the varna system and demolishes its logic with stunning analytical precision, while emphasizing that “destroying Caste would not destroy Hinduism”. It is the work of a scientist-philosopher. Never has clarity of thought jumped out from every



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paragraph, every sentence, so effortlessly. Ambedkar understood, experienced, and witnessed that the varna system was inherently and irrevocably intertwined with the caste system. “Only a congenital idiot would believe in the Chaturvarna as an ideal form of society.” he once said. “The names Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya, and Shudra are names which are associated with a definite and fixed notion in the mind of every Hindu. That notion is that of a hierarchy based on birth. So long as these names continue, Hindus will continue to think of the Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya, and Shudra as hierarchical divisions of high and low, based on birth, and to act accordingly. The Hindu must be made to unlearn all this. But how can this happen, if the old labels remain, and continue to recall to his mind old notions? If new notions are to be inculcated in the minds of people, it is necessary to give them new names. To continue the old names is to make the reform futile. To allow this Chaturvarnya based on worth to be designated by such stinking labels as Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya, Shudra, indicative of social divisions based on birth, is a snare.”

What Ambedkar says next is crucial for understanding the intertwining of the varna and the caste, a point missed by some who support the varna and not the caste, or others like Gandhi who support both the varna and the caste. “Chaturvarnya is based on worth. How are you going to compel people who have acquired a higher status based on birth, without reference to their worth, to vacate that status? How are you going to compel people to recognize the status due to a man, in accordance with his worth, who is occupying a lower status based on his birth? For this, you must first break up the Caste System, in order to be able to establish the Chaturvarnya system. How are you going to reduce the four thousand castes, based on birth, to the four Varnas, based on worth? This is the first difficulty that the protagonists of the Chaturvarnya must grapple with. Modern science has shown that the lumping together of individuals into a few sharply-marked-off classes is a superficial view of man, not worthy of serious consideration. Consequently, the utilization of the qualities of individuals is incompatible with their stratification by classes, since the qualities of individuals are so variable. Chaturvarnya must fail for the very reason for which Plato’s Republic must fail – namely, that it is not possible to pigeonhole men, according as they belong to one class or the other. That it is impossible to accurately classify people into four definite classes is proved by the fact that the original four classes have now become four thousand castes.”

Gandhi, true to his nature, hung on till his last in claiming there was a distinction between varna and caste, even though to him both were hereditary cohorts. No amount of brilliant, methodical, and detailed reasoning provided by Ambedkar could convince him to think otherwise. Gandhi’s rebuttal to The Annihilation of Caste was predictable

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and lacking in intellectual depth. “Dr Ambedkar is a challenge to Hinduism,” began Gandhi, and then tried to counter Ambedkar’s arguments on the need for forgoing caste and forgetting varna. It was secluded and patronising in tone. Ambedkar rebutted Gandhi’s rebuttal. “I am not in the habit of entering into controversy with my opponents unless there are special reasons which compel me to act otherwise. Had my opponent been some mean and obscure person, I would not have pursued him. But my opponent being the Mahatma himself, I feel I must attempt to meet the case to the contrary which he has sought to put forth.”

Yet again, Ambedkar was forced to channel all his energies into countering Gandhi, and yet again he did it with precision and aplomb, ending with words that continue to resonate long after they have been read. “The Hindus, in the words of Matthew Arnold, are wandering between two worlds, one dead, the other powerless to be born. What are they to do? The Mahatma to whom they appeal for guidance does not believe in thinking and can therefore give no guidance that can be said to stand the test of experience. The intellectual classes to whom the masses look for guidance are either too dishonest or too indifferent to educate them in the right direction. We are indeed witnesses to a great tragedy. In the face of this tragedy all one can do is to lament and say – such are thy Leaders, O Hindus!”

Ambedkar’s dismantling of the Mahatma was not linear or chronological in the sense that his rebuttals and critiques were not always immediate follow-up responses to Gandhi’s arguments. But Ambedkar made sure he never missed an opportunity to critique them in the strongest possible terms even if years had lapsed since they were uttered. And it is then that one realises what Ambedkar was up to. He was preparing for posterity an enormous counter-balance resource against someone who, he knew only too well, was soon going to make the jump from a Mahatma to a deity, the keeper of truth and purity of thought, a messiah who could not err. The entire world would fall at this apostle’s feet and any criticism of him would soon be considered blasphemous. Ambedkar was preparing us for that day. He even wrote a big fat book and titled it What Congress and Gandhi have done to the Untouchables with chapter headings that were self-explanatory: ‘Beware of Mr Gandhi’; ‘Gandhism: The Doom of the Untouchables’. ‘Beware of Mr Gandhi’ contains 14,075 words and each one of them speaks a thousand pictures.

Ambedkar, as was his nature, charts out in piercing detail Gandhi’s political timeline beginning 1894, demonstrating beyond doubt that Gandhi was a fraud when it came to the Dalit cause. In the next chapter, ‘Gandhism: The Doom of the Untouchables’, Ambedkar unwearyingly peels away all vestiges of Gandhi’s remaining credibility and

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his principles, leaving the reader breathless. From caste to varna to economy to hamlet utopia to industrialisation to class war to coercion to starvation blackmails to appeasement – the point-by-point exposé is unnerving, to say the least. Stop, Babasaheb, stop for the love of god, cries the reader; this is our Mahatma you are taking on, the great soul, the father of our nation, the saint who adorns our currency notes, the apostle who cannot be faulted. Stop, Babasaheb, I beg of you.

What Congress and Gandhi have done to the Untouchables is one spectacular demolition of Mahatma Gandhi, just as The Annihilation of Caste was of the proponents of varna and the caste system. Indeed, it could so easily have been titled ‘The Annihilation of Gandhi’. Some claim that the Congress banned this book, although one could find no evidence of this. In any case, very few know of its existence and even fewer have read it. Just as well because after absorbing its contents chapter and verse, one is forced to reflect on who really was this man we call ‘Mahatma’ and the father of our nation. Ambedkar had, of course, reflected on this very question for decades.

In a rare radio interview to the BBC one year before his death, [\[https://youtu.be/KDqkCy9jPec\]](https://youtu.be/KDqkCy9jPec) he explained the duplicitous core of the Mahatma with chilling lucidity. “I knew Gandhi better than most people because he opened his real fangs to me, and I could see the inside of the man. Gandhi was all the time double dealing. He ran a paper in English and another in Gujarati, and if you read them both you will see how he was deceiving the people. In the English paper he posed himself as an opponent of the caste system and of untouchability and that he was a democrat, while in the Gujarati one he supported the caste system and professed all the orthodox dogmas that have kept India down all through the ages. Someone ought to write his biography by making a comparative study of the statements he made in these papers. The West reads only the English paper. Gandhi never wanted real upliftment of the Dalits. All he cared about were issues of absolutely no consequence to us like temple entry. Gandhi was never a reformer.”

“However strong and however filthy be the abuses that the Congress Press chooses to shower on me,” said Ambedkar once, “I must do my duty. I am no worshipper of idols. I believe in breaking them. I insist that if I hate Mr Gandhi and Mr Jinnah – I dislike them, I do not hate them – it is because I love India more. That is the true faith of a nationalist. I have hopes that my countrymen will someday learn that the country is greater than the men, that the worship of Mr Gandhi or Mr Jinnah and service to India are two very different things and may even be contradictory of each other.”

Ambedkar was not Gandhi. All his life he tried, but he could not touch in Indians that which Gandhi could, this thing called the soul. But Ambedkar touched something more

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important than the soul. He touched the mind. Why do you care so much about the sanctity and purity of texts written thousands of years ago? You care because it touches your soul. You don't let your mind touch it for fear of negation and rejection of it. Who is your father? Is there such a thing as a father? Remove yourself from all the emotions that blood has given you possession of. Remind yourself that you are the creation of pure chance. That a sperm met an egg and then the cells divided, and then post-delivery, it just happened that you weren't swapped with another baby whose sperm and egg carriers were of a different religion. 155 million infants aged less than 3 are considered religious in our country.

They have been catalogued as Hindu and Muslim and Sikhs and Christians. THAT, no one seems to mind. What we DO mind and care about is that Mahatma Gandhi must be the one and true Father of our Nation. What do you see on your death-bed? What is your legacy? It is, then, in summation, up to us, the inheritors, to decide, who should we draw inspiration from: the one who touched our soul, or the one who touched our mind. The one who touched our soul because in him we saw our own inadequacies and wrongs and selectivity and illiberalism and bias and hurtful eccentricities and discrimination and social Darwinism and appeasement and casteism and duplicity and ludditism and pettiness and acceptance of religious hatred and condoning of holy book bigotry and orthodoxy and all those ills that we want hidden away in some corner; or the one who touched our mind because in him we saw an anger and an urgency to reform and a cry in the wilderness to shun the grey. Let there be no doubt. There isn't in my mind. The real father of our nation is Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar.